

NOVELS: THEIR ORIGIN AND USE.

(Continued from Page 1.)

tures (chivalrous and fabulous) of some impossible hero who often was identified with famous personage of history. They were full, too, of extravagant sentiment expressed in the artificial and wordy jargon fashionable at the time.

It is not in these, however, nor in what were then called novels, that we note the first appearance in prose of the characteristics which specially belong to the modern novel as distinguished from the romance of adventure. These new characteristics, and the new spirit which they expressed, crop out elsewhere most markedly, perhaps, in "The Pilgrim's Progress," where notwithstanding the didactic and allegorical purpose, the author's genius and keen powers of observation substitute for the cold symbols and personifications of allegory, vivid pictures of that lower middle-class English life with which he was familiar. For example the description of "Vanity Fair" and the "City of Destruction," "Ignorance," and "By Ends," and many more. Again later on, in the first dozen years of the eighteenth century, we find in the character sketches and descriptions of the "Spectator" preliminary studies, as it were, for a novel, without the plot and complexity of the novel itself. Especially is Addison's "Sir Roger de Coverley," the first person in English literature, who has all the peculiarities and is put before us by the method of modern fiction.

The next stage was the evolution of the modern novel, such as we now know it. This took place in the works of Richardson and Fielding, shortly before the middle of the eighteenth century. Here, at length the reader finds not a mere string of incidents but a converging plot—not "Arcadia," or such other fabulous scenes but contemporary English life—not impossible heroes and extravagant sentiments expressed in artificial language but actual men and women taking in a natural fashion; not a mere series of events, but incidents which interest many, because they exhibit and illustrate the characters of the personages concerned. They are treated too with that selection which constitutes artistic work, and carries the reader along in virtue of his awakened sympathies.

Having thus attained, as I hope, a somewhat clear perception of what a novel actually is, of what spirit it is the expression, and of what natural craving or demand it is the result, we are in a position to consider intelligently the use or function of the novel, why we read novels, and what is the outcome of novel-reading; and this in the face of a certain prejudice which still lingers against novel reading, it is a rather interesting subject.

The novel is the artistic presentation of human life, of men and women as they actually are, or have been. The substantial theme is human nature, the artist shapes and modifies his knowledge and his observations in order that the human life which he depicts may be easily conceived by his reader, so that he may be easily realized in his imagination, so that it may seize on his sympathies and hold his attention. In reading novels, therefore, the reader, through the material and help afforded by the writer, enters into the life of personages, not indeed real, but who represent reality.

The results are analogous to those which a man attains through seeing the world, getting acquainted with a great number of different personages, different conditions of society, different aspects of life. Such a broadening of real life is eminently desirable in general, though there may be individuals who would be injured by a wide acquaintance with life; who are of such a kind that they are best retained in a sort of cloistered seclusion; just as children should not be made acquainted with all aspects of life before their moral forces are consolidated. So I conceive the imaginative broadening of life which we attain through novels is also for the generality of men eminently wholesome.

I conceive the highest and best life here upon earth is the life which most adequately and completely employs all our powers. In a perfect life every function and activity with which nature has endowed us would receive its due proportion of exercise, as in the thoroughly healthy and ideal physique, every muscle will receive adequate employment and development. So the fundamental desire of man is for adequate scope, and repression of any activity gives a sense of uneasiness and results in a deforming of ideal manhood.

Of course, what I have said is true of all imaginative literature. The merit of the novel, as compared with other imaginative literature, is its popular character. It deals with the themes and persons most closely akin to those with which we are familiar, and hence most easily comprehended. Instead of the condensed and unfamiliar language of poets, it employs the language of ordinary life. Then the novelist's treatment is popu-

lar. He is free to use every means for explaining and bringing home to the reader the subject of his work. Novels can, therefore, be enjoyed by persons to whom other and higher forms of literature are a sealed book. Further, they may be enjoyed by the man of intellect and culture, when through weariness the energy is wanting requisite for the mastery or enjoyment of science, history or poetry.

If there is a use, as I think I have shown, of novels there is, doubtless, also an abuse. From the very characteristics upon which we have dwelt, they fall into the hands of readers the least competent to judge of excellence; the least competent to perceive and resist anything false and misleading. If it is the merit of great novels to give true pictures of life so there are very many which give false pictures; which exhibit the world as governed by principles which are not in fact dominant. From such novels the man of experience and cultivated taste turns away as utterly uninteresting and inane. But the untrained spirit may accept it all as gospel, and form false conceptions of what the world is and what is desirable there. Like the boy of whom we read from time to time in the newspapers, who prematurely starts life as a highwayman or thinks that the ideal life is to be found among the Indians and cowboys of the West. But this objection urged against novels also lies against all forms of literature. There is no larger a proportion of false fiction than of false history, false biography, science, ethics, theology. The safety in these other departments lies in the fact that they are but little read.

So, doubtless, some discrimination ought to be exercised in the selection of novels, for the young especially. Not that books beyond their powers of appreciation and which are distasteful to them should be thrust into their hands. That is not the way to make them care for good literature; and novel-reading is the most natural and easy way to cultivate the taste for books. He who has developed a taste for really good novels is not likely to stop there, but will naturally advance to reading of a higher character.

To turn from this long digression we must further note that not merely our knowledge of life and our experience are imaginatively widened by novels, but our own powers of observation and enjoyment of actual life are quickened and intensified thereby. He who has contemplated life as seen through the eyes of a great seer, who has become acquainted with human nature through the imaginative pictures of a Scott or a Thackeray, will find new sources of interest in the men and women about him. He will have his attention drawn to the significance and beauty of much that would otherwise have escaped his observation. Just as those who have read Wordsworth or Ruskin, or are familiar with the landscapes of great painters, will have their eyes opened to many aspects of nature, to many elements of beauty in the material world to which they would otherwise have been blind.

And though the supreme might and power of Shakespeare are the most helpful, yet the novelists, working as they do more in the sphere of our own observation and experience, and employing a more popular form, have a special function and use of their own.

Finally, novels afford refreshment and solace, and the refreshment of an extremely salutary kind. And this is a thing not easily brought about. Novels lead us away from ourselves and our own concerns. The human spirit requires change—we weary of all things—we weary even of ourselves. To escape from ourselves, our cares, our thoughts, our environment, is a delightful and wholesome experience. Such escape is essential to our moral, mental, even our physical well-being. The man who cannot escape from himself, goes mad. A novel affords repose: it is available at any moment: at any moment it may be laid aside. It is an invaluable resource for the overwrought and weary man. I have put forward other and perhaps higher claims for the novel, but I think for the multitudes who can look back upon the hours they have spent in smiling over the quaint humors of Parson Adams and Partridge, the Vicar of Wakefield, Mr. Wilkins Micawber and in following the wanderings of Tom Jones and Waverley, and David Balfour; in making the acquaintance of Captain Costigan and Dick Swiveller, Beck Sharp and Blanche Amory, whose hearts have been touched by the sorrows of Jennie Deans, Colonel Newcome, who have had the door thrown open to many and varied circles, the Poyzers and the Pullets, the Bennets and the Woodhouses, to a thousand other scenes of laughter, of pathos, of beauty and worth, which crowd upon the memory,—to these, I think, there needs no other place for novels than the many hours of happy and innocent enjoyment of solace, of freedom from depression and weariness, which the great magicians of the world of fiction have provided for their readers.

NORMAL COLLEGE ELECTIONS:

The Literary Society of the Normal College, Hamilton, had an interesting election for the various offices Friday afternoon. The presidency was keenly contested for, as were some of the other offices. The result was as follows:

First honorary president, J. A. McLellan, M.A., LL.D.; 2nd honorary president R. A. Thompson B.A.; patron, Hon. J. M. Gibson; president, L. H. Graham, B.A., Toronto; 1st vice-president, Miss Tuer; 2nd vice-president, F. C. Shaw, B.A., Trinity; recording secretary, J. S. Martin B.A., Toronto; corresponding secretary, Miss McInnes; treasurer, W. H. T. McGill, B.A.,

PHYSIOGNOMICAL HAIRCUTTING

We cut your hair as it should be cut. A man's hair cut in the proper way adds greatly to his personal appearance. Our barbers are artists in their line. Call and be convinced that there is a right and a wrong way of cutting hair.

HUD JOY, Rossin House Barber Shop

Toronto; committee Miss B. H. Nichols, B.A., Toronto; Miss Evans Miss J. I. Wood, Messrs. J. Taylor, B.A., Queen's, W. A. Wilson, B.A., Queen's, and Holmes; editors of College Jottings N. F. Black and R. B. Page, B.A., Toronto.

At the Mock Parliament on Saturday evening, Patrick Johnston, Q.C., M.P., completely surprised the members present by delivering one of the most powerful speeches ever heard in the hall forcibly arraigning the government, and concluding by moving a vote of want of confidence in the administration which was carried by a large majority.

WYCLIFFE COLLEGE.

E. A. Langfeldt who has been ill for a few days has recovered and left the college on Thursday to make a short visit in Orillia.

Rev. R. J. Carson, of Sunderland, made a flying visit to Wycliffe last week. Mr. Carson is a recent graduate and his visits are always enjoyed by the students.

T. W. Savary, '00, assisted in the services of St. Paul's Church on Sunday of last week.

Many of the students are working hard this month in order that they may find time next month to attend the meeting of the Church Students' Missionary Association in Trinity College, Toronto, and also the convention of the Student Volunteer Movement in Cleveland.

Maurice J. Goodheart will give a free lecture on Tuesday evening, February 1st, in St. Peter's Sunday school room. The subject of the lecture will be 'The Jew's Life in Russia.'

Rev. Prof. Cody, of the faculty, is preaching a series of sermons in St. Paul's Church on Sunday evenings on "The Lord's Prayer."

The Literary and Theological Society of Wycliffe College will hold its annual "At Home" on Friday evening January 28th. Extensive preparations are being made by the energetic executive committee, which consists of Messrs. Holdsworth, Haslam, Good- eve, McClean and Docker.

TRINITY LITERARY INSTITUTE.

There was a large audience at the Literary Institute on Friday night, the interest being centred round the conversational discussion. The presence of the Reverend the Provost, the Dean and Professor Cayley added interest to the proceedings. Mr. Bushell read one of his characteristic selections, and was of course heartily applauded. Mr. Bell was unable to be present. Mr. Higginson's essay was particularly good and a vote was passed that it be preserved. The conversational discussion was opened by Mr. Macdougall's motion to dispense with it this year. The Provost, the Dean, and Prof. Cayley spoke for the faculty, Messrs. Baldwin, Bushell, Sparling and others for the students. Opinions were quite unanimous, and the vote resulted in the passing of the motion. Some minor business was transacted, a motion being passed transferring the power of electing representatives from the council to the members in regular meeting. It was also decided to hold a public debate. The date for the latter will probably be Thursday, February 16th.

We Know How

And we do it

Our celebrated finish on linen has made us the Leading Launderers in Canada.

Our Motto: Good Work, Prompt Delivery.

The Parisian Steam Laundry

Company of Ontario, Limited

67 ADELAIDE ST. W., TORONTO
'Phone 1127 E. M. Moffatt, M'gr

The Bryce Studio

107 KING WEST

For artistic finish and excellent workmanship our photographs are not excelled in Canada. Groups a specialty. Reduction to students.

Students' Barber Shop

McNAUGHT'S

316 College St.

FIRST CLASS WORK ONLY

Riding a Bike

is a delightful pastime when one's wheel is in proper shape. If yours needs mending, and you wish to have it done right, send it to the

Emery Bicycle Works

406 YONGE ST.

Are You Fast?

You can be when on the ice if you have on our tubular steel Benner racing skates. Skating boots made to order and fitted to these skates for \$7. Best hockey boots in oil-tanned leather, special design, for \$3. Give me a call and you will give me an order.

FRED IVEY

170 Bay Street

BODEGA

RESTAURANT AND CATERING ESTABLISHMENT

Cor, Leader Lane and Wellington

Catering for College and Class Dinners, Lunches, At-Homes, etc.

First-class accommodation for Banquets and Assemblies at the Restaurant.

For estimates and prices apply to

ALBERT WILLIAMS, Proprietor.

Hockey Boots

Made to order or taken from stock

Special at \$2.50

BROTHERTON'S

550 YONGE ST.

Pocket Diaries AND Canadian Almanac

FOR 1898

At

VANNEVAR'S

438 Yonge St.

By special appointment, Caterers to His Excellency the Governor-General of Canada.

The HARRY WEBB Co.

Limited

66, 68 and 447 Yonge Street, Toronto.

For Theatricals

WIGS AND BEARDS TO LET

JOHN MAX

153½ King W. Wig Maker

The Outside of an Overcoat

That's the part everyone sees. Dingy and spotted, no matter how well made it may be, it is condemned as an old coat. We remove the spots and brighten up the coat for a trifle, and then you have a new coat again.

R. PARKER & CO.

HEAD OFFICE AND WORKS—127-131 Yonge St.
BRANCHES—59 King St. W., 201 Yonge St., 471 Queen St. W., 1267 Queen St. W., 277 Queen St. E.
PHONES—3037, 3640, 2143, 1004, 5098

To Be Well Dressed

Every gentleman needs at least two good Collar-Buttons, a neat set of Shirt Studs and Cuff Links, a good Watch, neat Guard and a gold Ring for his finger; and, should you add a pair of gold Eyeglasses and a Cane, we will supply the bill to your entire satisfaction.

Students' trade a specialty.

J. ROWLEY & CO.

Jewellers

430 Spadina, Cor. Oxford